

Media release

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One child in five is unable to read properly, NPC report shows

One child in five suffers from poor literacy skills, says a new report out today. Unless dealt with at an early stage, poor literacy skills can cost taxpayers as much as £53,000 per person, with one third of Britain's workforce having literacy problems.

The report, *Read on*, is published by New Philanthropy Capital, an independent, non-profit making organisation which advises donors on how to give more effectively to charities. The report highlights the vital work charities provide in tackling the problem and the potential long term savings to society.

Approximately 12 million adults have literacy skills at or below the level expected of an 11 year old. In addition 21% of 11 year olds leave primary school with literacy skills below the expected standard, including 7% who have reading skills at or below the age of a 7 year old. The bottom 7% has not improved since 1998, despite a government effort to tackle poor levels of child literacy.

Martin Brookes, director of research at NPC, said: 'Tackling literacy problems at an early stage is essential if children are to make the most of their schooling and avoid being left behind later in life. Charities have a very important role to play because schools do not have adequate resources to provide the level of support children with reading and writing problems need.'

NPC highlights a number of charities that have a significant effect on improving children's literacy levels and with it, their chance for greater economic success later in life.

Every Child a Reader, a project led by the KPMG Foundation, funds Reading Recovery, an intensive one-to-one programme aimed at the poorest readers aged 5-6 years in primary school. The programme, which costs £2,500 per child, is highly effective; results show that every £1 spent on the programme increase future earnings by £12, a return of more than 1200%.



Another charity, Volunteer Reading Help, recruits and trains volunteers to work in primary schools. It has 2,000 volunteers working with 6-11 year olds to build children's self-confidence and reading skills. It costs around £400 per child and the charity reports that 61% of children make a significant or outstanding improvement in their reading abilities.

For further information about NPC, its research reports and charity recommendations, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Notes to Editors

1. New Philanthropy Capital advises all types of donors on how to give more effectively. It identifies examples of charities with highly effective approaches to tackling problems in the sector. By recommending these charities to potential donors, NPC aims to increase the quantity and quality of resources available to the charitable sector.
2. NPC focuses on human welfare, including problems in communities and families, education, and health and disability in the UK. NPC has published research on sectors ranging from cancer to older people, and domestic violence to special educational needs.
3. NPC develops a detailed understanding of social problems by talking to policy-makers, practitioners, academics and other experts. Its charity recommendations are arrived at after visiting and analysing charities across the sector. Assessments are made of the achievements, the need for additional funding, the financial structure and fundraising potential, as well as the risks.
4. NPC uses its research and experience to help donors ensure they have high impact and a rewarding experience. This can involve developing a tailored giving strategy to meet specific goals, selecting which charities to support and reporting on impact. Donors can also access NPC's research and its recommendations at no cost on NPC's website.